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NATURAL HISTORY MISCELLANY.

BOTANY.

Double Flowered Sarracenia.—In the summer of 1867, I found a specimen of the *Sarracenia purpurea*, double, in East Hampton, Mass. In the summer of 1868, I found a specimen of the *Geranium maculatum*, with all the parts of the flower of a pure white.—E. S. Miller, *Wading River, N. Y.*

ZOÖLOGY.

The Breeding Habits of Birds are subject to so great variations, that it is not safe to give the practices of a few individuals as being the general habits of the species. Any one who has given much attention to the subject, must be convinced of this, both from his own experience and that of others who have written upon the subject. And there can be no doubt that the apparent discrepancies of writers are frequently the result of founding conclusions upon insufficient data. Take the Kingfisher as an example. In a number of cases which have come under my observation, the passages leading to the nests were invariably straight, so that there was no difficulty in reaching the extremity of the excavation with a straight stick. This agrees with Dr. Wood's experience as given in the September number of the Naturalist. Mr. Samuels, in his "Birds of New England," says they excavate a "winding hole." Mr. Fowler and Mr. Endicott, in the Naturalist, describe them as being "in the form of an elbow." But while all these descriptions are doubtless correct, is it correct to state in general terms that the passage is in the form of an elbow, thus implying that this is the invariable, or even general form? One of the nests which I have found had the bottom covered with fish bones, the ejected pellets of the bird, and upon these the eggs were laid.

I have in my collection a set of Long-eared Owls' eggs, six in number. I have not been fortunate enough to find another nest, but should I represent this species as usually laying six eggs, I should probably convey a wrong impression.

While visiting a heronry last spring, on one of the low islands off the coast of Cape Charles, Va., I found a nest of the Clapper-rail (*Rallus crepitans*) built in a bush, and about a foot from the ground. I have seen many nests of this species, but that is the only instance in which I have known the bird to nest elsewhere than on the ground. The land was low and wet, and liable to inundation, which was the probable cause of the bird's departure from the usual habit of the species.

In an article by Mr. Fowler in the September number of the Naturalist, I find the eggs of the Ruffed Grouse thus described: "The color of